

REMARKS

This paper is responsive to an Office Action mailed April 8, 2004.

Claims 1-16 were provisionally withdrawn in a telephone discussion, conducted with Examiner Torres on March 24. The claims were withdrawn in response to a restriction requirement. The Applicant reaffirms the selection of claims 17-32, without traverse. After amendments to claims 17-18 and 22-26, and the addition of claims 33-36, claims 17-36 remain pending.

Section 2 of the Office Action objects to the oath. In response, a newly signed oath is enclosed as Attachment B.

Section 3 of the Office Action objects to Fig. 7a. In response, a new figure has been provided, enclosed as Attachment A. The Office Action also states that the drawings include illegible handwriting. The Applicant has reviewed the Applicant's copy of the drawings and can find no evidence of illegible handwriting. However, the Applicant is willing to replace any particular sheet that the Examiner finds objectionable.

In Section 4 of the Office Action, claims 17-32 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to distinctly claim the subject matter. In Claim 17, the Office Action states that there is no antecedent basis for the phrase "determined in response to the non-causal bit value comparisons". In response, the phrase has been amended to – determined in response to the non-causal bit value comparisons--.

In claim 18 the Office Action objects to the phrase "the current, first bit, estimate". In response, the claim has been amended to --a first bit estimate--. The word "the" has been replaced with --a--, as suggested by the Examiner, and the word "current" has been deleted. Likewise, the phrase "the first bit value" has been replaced with --a first bit value--, as suggested by the Examiner.

In claim 22, the phrase "the FEC corrections" has been amended to --the FEC corrections--, as suggested by the Examiner.

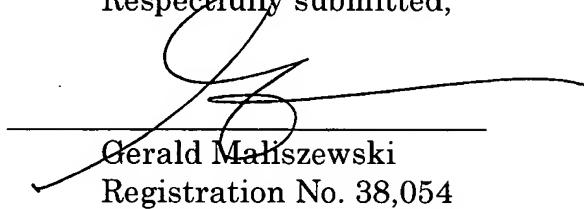
In claims 23-26, the Applicant has amended the phrase "the first bit values" as suggested by the Examiner. However, antecedent basis for the phrase "the stream of corrected data bits" can be found in the last line of claim 22. To further clarify the claims, they have been amended to recite the source of the stream of corrected data bits, which is the FEC circuit.

Section 5 of the Office Action states that claim 17 would be found allowable if the above-mentioned 35 U.S.C. 112, paragraph two, rejections could be successfully addressed. This section of the Office action also states the reasons for allowance. The Applicant does not necessarily disagree, nor concur with the expressed rationale.

It is believed that this application is now in a condition of allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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